

30. SOME NOTEWORTHY PLANTS FROM WEST BENGAL

During recent floristic surveys (1975-1977) of the Jalpaiguri and Midnapore districts, several species collected were new distributional records for West Bengal. The following four species which have now extended their distributional range to the northern and southern tracts of West Bengal are discussed alongwith correct nomenclature, diagnostic features and field notes. Specimens cited have been deposited in the Central National Herbarium (CAL).

VITACEAE

Cissus assamica (Laws.) Craib. in Kew Bull. 1911: 31. 1911; Mukerjee in Rec. bot. Surv. India 20 (2):61. 1973. *Vitis assamica* Laws in Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 1:648. 1875; Prain, Bengal Plants 1:237. 1903 (repr.); Kanjilal *et al.*, Fl. Assam 1 (ii):291. 1936; Ghosh & Ghosh in Bull. bot Soc. Bengal 31:80. 1977.

A slender glabrous climber with simple tendrils; leaves orbicular or cordate, shortly acuminate, margin bristly-serrate; flowers greenish-white on slender pedicels; fruit juicy, black at maturity; seeds small, smooth.

Jalpaiguri district—Bania, Chilapata forest range, rare in the semievergreen forest, fr., 17 Sept. 1975, *Sikdar* 570. *Midnapore district*—Balibhasa, Manikpara forest range, occasional in the forest outskirts preferably in moist shady localities, fr., 19 Nov. 1976, *Maji* 7694; Mayurjharna, Banspahari forest range, rare climbing over the bushes, fl., 1 Jul. 1976, *Maji* 3155.

The species restricted to Eastern India, and has so far been known to occur in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura. Recently it has been recorded by Mukerjee (l.c.) from Bhutan. Prain (l.c.) mentioned its distribution in Chittagong (Bangladesh). Recently

its occurrence in the northern tract of West Bengal has been mentioned by Ghosh & Ghosh (i.c.) based on V. Narayanswami's collection from Jalpaiguri district without giving precise locality and description. Hence the present collections establishes its occurrence further in West Bengal and also shows further extension of the range of its distribution into the plain of southern tract of West Bengal.

CONNARACEAE

Connarus paniculatus Roxb. (Hort. Beng. 49. 1814, *nom. nud.*) Fl. Ind. 3:139. 1832; J. D. Hooker in Fl. Brit. India 2:52. 1876; Prain, Bengal Plants 1:254. 1903 (repr.); Kanjilal *et al.*, Fl. Assam 2:2. 1938; Leenhouts in Fl. Males. Ser. I, 5:533. 1958; Sengupta in Rec. bot. Surv. India 20 (2): 66. 1973.

Large, much-branched woody climber; leaves 2-3 jugate, glabrous, leaflets elliptic-oblong or elliptic-lanceolate, entire; inflorescence broadly paniculate, ferruginous-tomentose; capsule semi-obovoid, base narrowed into a short stipe.

Midnapore district—Tapoban, Chandabila forest range, rare in dry mixed forests along streams, climbing over *Ardisia solanacea*, *Dalbergia tamarindaefolia*, etc., fr., 4 Mar. 1976, *Maji* 2934 & fl., 15 Nov. 1976, *Maji* 4235.

It occurs in South China, Indo-China, Hainan, Malay Peninsula, Bhutan and Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland in India, Prain (l.c.) recorded it from Chittagong (Bangladesh). Though Leenhouts (l.c.) mentioned its occurrence in Bengal, presumably from the present day area of Bangladesh, yet it is still not recorded from the present day from West Bengal. However, a single specimen collected by Wm. Roxburgh in cultivated condition from Indian Botanic Garden, Howrah,

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indicates its only existence in West Bengal. So, the recent collection in wild condition from the above mentioned locality is worthy of record for its extension of distribution in the plains of West Bengal.

FABACEAE

Crotalaria humifusa Grah. (in Wall. Cat. no. 5421. 1831-32, *nom. nud.*) ex Benth. in Hook. Lond. Journ. Bot. 2:476. 1843; J. G. Baker in Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 2:67. 1876; Kanjilal *et al.*, Fl. Assam 2:11. 1938; Munk in Reinwardtia 6(3):205. 1962; H. Ohasi in Hara, Fl. East. Himal. 146. 1966; K. P. Biswas, Plants Darj. & Sikkim Himal. Vol. I, 270. 1966.

Prostrate, much-branched, densely villous herb; leaves simple, \pm round-oblong, obtuse, sessile, glaucous beneath; flowers in axillary and terminal lax-flowered, leaf-opposed racemes, yellowish; pods oblong, 4-6 seeded.

Jalpaiguri district-Mahakalguri, Alipurduar, fl., 28 Oct. 1891, *Heywood* 113. *Midnapore district*-Bhulabhada, Banspahari forest range, rare on moist rock under partial shade along a stream associated with *Oldenlandia corymbosa*, *Juncus prismatocarpus*, *Hemigraphis latibrosa*, *Crotalaria prostrata* etc., fl., 17 Nov. 1976, *Maji* 7332.

It is distributed in Bhutan, Burma, Thailand, Indo-China, Malaysia and in India known so far from Sikkim, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Biswas (l.c.) reported it as an occasional plant in the middle hill forests of Darjeeling and Sikkim hills. Ohasi (l.c.) mentioned this species from Nepal. On scrutiny of the herbarium material of the taxon (in CAL), we came across one specimen of the species collected by E. A. Heywood in 1891 from Jalpaiguri district and as such that specimen is included here as the new additional

locality in North Bengal. It is interesting that the recent collection of the species from the plains of Southern Bengal indicates that it has succeeded in spreading southwards in West Bengal plains through Jalpaiguri district. It may be possible to locate it in other intervening zones of West Bengal.

MORACEAE

Phyllochlamys spinosa Bur. in DC. Prodr. 17:218. 1873; J. D. Hooker in Fl. Brit. India 5:488. 1888; Prain, Bengal Plants 2:727. 1903 (repr.); Haines, Bot. Bihar & Orissa 3:860. 1922 (repr.).

Small evergreen gnarled tree, armed with sharp spines; leaves elliptic or obovate, acuminate, irregularly serrate; flowers dioecious; fruit obovoid, splitting into 2-valves.

Jalpaiguri district-Rajabhatkhawa, rare in the semievergreen forest, fr., 6 Jun. 1976, *Sikdar* 8132. *Midnapore district*-Baura, Nayagram forest range, rare in the scrub jungle along the river Subarnarekha, fl., 21 Apr. 1976, *Mali* 7765.

It has been reported so far from Bihar, Deccan Peninsula, South India, Andaman Islands in India and Sri Lanka and Malaya Islands. Prain (l.c.) and Haines (l.c.) have recorded it from Orissa. It is assumed that the present recording of the species in West Bengal indicates its further north-eastwards extension from Bihar and Orissa ranges.

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BASAK, R. K. (1976): The bibliography of the flora and vegetation of Bengal with an introductory note. *Bull. bot. Surv. India*, 15 (1 & 2): 22-38.

31. NOTES ON TWO RARE AND INTERESTING PLANTS FROM SOUTH INDIA

(With three text-figures)

The paper presents the description of hitherto undescribed fruits and seeds of *Lasianthus dichotomus* Wight, a rare and endemic species which was collected after a lapse of over 100 years; and records the occurrence of *Pueraria phaseoloides* (Roxb.) Benth. for the first time in South India.

Lasianthus dichotomus Wight in Calc. J. nat. Hist. 6: 508. 1846; Bedd. Ic. t. 13. 1868-74; Hook. f. Fl. Brit. India 3: 191. 1880; Gamble, Fl. Pres. Madras 648. 1921 & 2: 457. 1957 (repr. ed.). *Mephitidia dichotoma* (Wight) Walp. Ann. 2: 761. 1852. [RUBIACEAE].

R. Wight (1846) described this species from Western Ghats in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu without describing the fruits. While studying the specimens of *L. dichotomus* Wight represented at Madras Herbarium (MH), a subsequent collection made by R. H. Beddome in 1869 was noted. It is of interest that this rare and endemic species could be relocated from Mahendragiri peak of Tirunelveli District in 1972, after a lapse of over 100 years. R. H. Beddome (loc. cit.) has not made any mention about the fruits of this species. Further, J. D. Hooker (1880) stated... "Drupe not seen". The same lacuna in the description

has continued in the critical flora of Gamble (1921). Interestingly, we could find the fruits of this species in some of the specimens in MH. These sheets have been critically studied so as to supplement the description with the fruits and seeds for a better understanding of this species.

Drupes 6-7 × 5-6 mm, subglobose, sparsely pilose or glabrescent, with persistent calyx lobes; pyrenes ± 6 × 3 mm, 3-4, triquetrous, crustaceous, often rugose dorsally, 1-seeded. Seeds ± 3 × 1 mm, black, narrowly ovate-oblong, dorsally convex, ventrally flat, glabrous. (Figs. 1-3).

Specimens examined: TAMIL NADU. Tirunelveli Dt.: Shevagherry, *Wight s.n.* (in fl., acc. no. 26414 Type material, MH); *Wight s.n.* (in fl. & young fr., acc. no. 26416 Type material, MH); Chokkampatty hills, in fl. & fr., *Collector? s.n.* (acc. no. 26417, MH); Tinnevely, in fl., 1869, *Beddome s.n.* (acc. no. 26415, MH); Way to Mahendragiri peak, in fl. & fr., 8-2-1972, 1550 m, *Sharma 40033* (MH).

Pueraria phaseoloides (Roxb.) Benth. in J. Linn. Soc. 11: 125. 1867; Baker in Hook. f. Fl. Brit. India 2: 199. 1876; Kanjilal *et al.*, Fl. Assam 2: 82. 1938; Duthie, Fl. Up. Gang. Pl. 1: 216. 1960 (repr. ed.); Haines,